

# PACKAGING AND ITS ROLE IN THE POLISH CONFECTIONERY MARKET

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of both packaging materials and packaging methods in the late 50's has resulted in the emergence of a new branch of industrial design – packaging design. At the same time, Marketing has been widely recognized as a new field of business activities. Consequently, marketers have started to consider packaging as a driving force behind the sales productivity. In the present paper the question of packaging is discussed in terms of utilizing packaging design in driving sales of confectioneries. Among the fundamental goals of the research the following ones can be distinguished:

- identification of relations between packaging and the elements of marketing mix;
- review of functions performed by packaging;
- specification of psychological impact of packaging on purchasing decisions;
- review of legal regulations concerning packaging design of food and beverages;
- exemplification of packaging's role in the Polish confectionery market including identifying the most attractive elements of packaging design.

## 1. PACKAGING AND THE MARKETING MIX

According to traditional marketing approach, four basic elements of the marketing mix can be identified. These are: product, price, place and promotion [Kotler 2004, p. 97]. There are two radically different ways of expressing

interrelations which occur between packaging and the components of the marketing mix formula.

Philip Kotler and Theodore Levitt consider packaging as an integral part of the product. In order to understand the suggested line of reasoning, the concept of the product is about to be shortly explained. In marketing, a product is anything that can be offered to a market that might satisfy a want or need [Kotler et al. 2006, p. 17]. Not only are physical products included here but also services, places, organizations and ideas. Hence the majority of products shall be considered as the combination of both tangible and intangible elements. It is worth noting that the performance of a product in particular market is primarily determined by the extent to which it meets customer needs and expectations [Altkorn 1996, p. 114]. For this reason, the moving forces behind customer buying decisions are reflected in Kotler's product framework [Hales 1999, p. 43]. The author uses five levels in order to explain the idea of an integrated value which is delivered to customers. These are: core product, generic product, expected product, augmented product, and potential product. According to this concept, packaging is seen as an integral part of the product. When combined with the core product, it contributes to customers' perception at the generic level [Mruk, Rutkowski 1999, p. 23]. In that sense, packaging acts as an attribute which is absolutely necessary for a product to function.

The other group of marketers considers packaging as the fifth component of the marketing mix [Cichoń 1996, p. 146]. In this case, packaging is seen as a separate object of market transactions. Since it is not believed to be a part of any product's level, packaging does not reflect core benefits that make up a product.

Regardless of the theoretical approach, packaging design is influenced by the interrelations occurring between the remaining components of the marketing mix. All activities related to the creation of packaging have to be integrated into the overall marketing strategy in order to ensure its consistency and induce synergies. Therefore, issues which should be given a particular attention will be shortly discussed here.

## 1.1. PRODUCT

Packaging undoubtedly coexists with a product. Hence there are three fundamental reasons behind the changes in packaging design [Hales 1999, p. 43]. Firstly, packaging improvements may be associated with the product quality improvements. Secondly, they may give an impression of product's novelty. Finally, they might serve as the source of competitive advantage. In terms of strategic implications, packaging modifications may result in the emergence

of a new product (e.g. liquid soap) or a new market (e.g. pre-packaged motor oil). In each case, the modification of packaging must be preceded by the analysis of product's characteristics, form, shape and size. These features may stimulate or restrict the use of packaging materials.

## 1.2. PRICE

Packaging is believed to have an indirect effect on price. In most cases, the cost of packaging contributes to the overall cost of manufacturing a particular product [Mruk, Rutkowski 1999, p. 94]. However, since the competition has intensified, the pricing formula has become more complex. Firstly, it is no longer rare that the cost of one packaging exceeds the value of its content. Secondly, companies have started to downsize packaging in order to leave prices at the same level [Hales 1999, p. 48]. As a result, the importance of packaging has been recognized at the strategic level (especially in pricing strategies).

## 1.3. PLACE

Packaging plays an important role in both distribution channels and points of sale. First of all, pre-packaged goods can be stored safely. The extended period of storage enables wholesalers as well as retailers to take an advantage of inventory management and respond flexibly to changes in demand. Moreover, packaging protects the content and reduces the losses during transportation. It is also useful when grouping standardized products into batches. Finally, packaging makes it easy to identify different products in various distribution channels. Consequently warehouses are managed effectively and customer service is improved. In order to benefit from the use of packaging, the characteristics of various distribution channels and points of sales must be reflected in packaging design. It is worth mentioning that if one product is distributed through competitive distribution channels, it is reasonable to differentiate its packaging [Mruk, Rutkowski 1999, p. 93].

## 1.4. PROMOTION

Packaging is simply the best tool to engage customer attention and drive purchase intent. It is capable of appreciably affecting customer's behaviors before, during and after a purchase. First, packaging enables a buyer to identify and recognize the product which has drawn his attention earlier, e.g. in

TV commercial. Then, graphics, shapes and colours are used to persuade a customer to make a purchase. Packaging acts here as the basis for individual perceptions of product's functional features. It arouses interest in the product, provides relevant information and realizes unconscious needs of the target group. Hence it is called '*silent salesman*' [Szlak 2004]. It should be noted here that the persuasive role of packaging is of greater importance to fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) than capital goods. Finally, after a purchase is made, packaging aims to maximize buyer's satisfaction with product use. It therefore affects the level of customer loyalty. The use of packaging along with other promotional tools enables a company to take an advantage of synergies (Table 1).

Table 1. Packaging and promotional tools

Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the same message is delivered to customers by both packaging and advertising</li> <li>• the same graphics is used in advertising and packaging design</li> <li>• synergies are achieved if packaging is placed in advertising</li> <li>• packaging is the cheapest advertising carrier</li> </ul>
Sales promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>cents-off deal</i>: a product is offered at a lower price; price reduction is marked on packaging</li> <li>• <i>price-pack deal</i>: more of a product is offered for the same price; a certain percentage of premium content is be marked on packaging</li> <li>• <i>contests, sweepstakes, games</i>: a product is offered with a ticket which entitles its user to participate in several competitions ; coupons are placed inside or outside packaging</li> <li>• <i>samplings</i>: a product is offered with a free sample; samples are usually attached to the surface of packaging</li> <li>• <i>designed to re-use</i>: a product is offered with a packaging that may be re-used; this type of packaging encourages customers to make regular purchases</li> </ul>
Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• packaging gives the first impression of the image of a company</li> <li>• information relevant to various shareholders (i.e. logotype, quality symbols, environmental icons) is placed on packaging</li> </ul>

Source: Hales 1999, pp. 64–72; Szymczak, Ankiel-Homa 2006, pp. 12–13.

Since there are significant interactions between packaging and other elements of the marketing mix, packaging is believed to add substantial value to the market offer. Indeed, it enables customers to easily dose the content, re-use the product and storage it safely. Strategically, packaging innovations increase the level of perceived product quality which, in turn, provides manufacturers with a temporary edge over competitors [Fishel, King Gordon 2007,

pp. 32–36]. Packaging may also serve as a basis for market creation and acquisition. For example, the introduction of both aerosol containers and vacuum packages resulted in irreversible changes in consumption patterns.

## 2. THE FUNCTIONS OF PACKAGING

The role of packaging in the business area has significantly evolved over the last few decades. Packaging's function was initially limited to the protection of the content [Cichoń 1996, p. 17]. However, as the global market saturated, customers have started to use emotional rather than rational evaluation criteria when purchasing [Hales 1999, p. 9]. Therefore, it has been necessary to diversify primary functions of packaging in order to compete successfully. As a result, tasks performed by packaging are currently of interest to three fields of science: Commodity Science, Ecology and Marketing [Cichoń 1996, p. 18].

Primary functions of packaging concern mainly its technical nature [Hales 1999, p. 12]. Protective function essentially involves protecting contents from the external environment and vice versa. Storage function is fulfilled every time each product is stored in different locations. It applies to both before and after the package contents have been used. Packaging has also a crucial impact on the efficiency of transport. It facilitates the formation of cargo units so that it is always easy to pick up and load batches.

Secondary functions of packaging relate to communications [Mruk, Rutkowski 1999, s. 88]. The sales function involves enabling or promoting the sales process and making it more efficient. Promotional function aims at attracting buyer's attention. Packaging design is believed here to have an positive impact on the purchasing decision. The main objective of service function is to provide customers with details about the content and use of a particular good. Moreover, once the content has been used, packaging may also fulfill further tasks. Finally, packaging acts as the basis for ensuring quality and product liability. This guarantee function is heavily related to legislative requirements.

In order to address environmental problems, packaging performs ecological functions [Cichoń 1996, p. 28]. They essentially relate to the extent to which packaging containers or packaging materials may be re-used once the content has been utilized.

This study aims to investigate secondary functions of packaging performed in the Polish confectionery market.

### 3. THE IMPACT OF PACKAGING DESIGN ON PRODUCT PERCEPTION

The primary function of FMCG packaging is to attract customers [Calver 2007, p. 8]. The package is considered here to act as a brand ambassador. In that sense, it should sell itself. This means every company needs to have a strong brand identity so that each packaging is capable of communicating clear, concise and relevant information to the target audience [Stewart 2009, p. 38]. Packaging design requires also a creative idea and an accurate assessment of long-term financial consequences with respect to both micro and macro environment. A comprehensive look at the packaging life cycle – from design and manufacturing until its disposal – ensures its consistency with company's goals.

Most successful packages are those which reflect attitudes and behaviors of the target group [Calver 2007, p. 28]. For this reason, designers use highly sophisticated segmentation techniques. The profile of a customer is largely based on demographics and psychographics [Fishel 2003, p. 12]. It aims to explain why customers buy the particular product. By doing so, it is possible to understand and anticipate the actions of the target audience [Fishel 2003, p. 19]. All these information is then presented in the mood board. It primarily consists of pictures and symbols which best represent customers' aspirations [Stewart 2009, p. 41]. It is the way buyers perceive these icons that is next translated into packaging design.

During the process of perception customers absorb stimuli and then use them to interpret the world [Solomon 2006, p. 67]. In terms of packaging design, three stages of the perception process may be distinguished: stimulus exposure, attention, and interpretation.

Whenever a stimulus reaches buyer's sensory receptors, the exposure phase is induced. Both characteristics of stimuli and customers' attitudes are of great importance here. They simply determine whether the signals transmitted by the packaging are likely to be noticed or ignored. The power of each stimulus depends primarily on its [Solomon 2006, p. 85]:

- *size*, e.g. large inscriptions placed on the packaging attract customer attention faster than those written with the use of relatively small font;
- *colour*, e.g. white packaging of chocolate bar stands out from the brownish ones;
- *location*, e.g. the information about the contest is noticed faster when placed on the front of the packaging than at the back of it;
- *novelty*, e.g. liquid and spray candies are far more likely to draw customer's attention than ordinary goodies.

Once the stimulus has been exposed, buyer's attention is likely to be drawn to the packaging. Since the target audience interprets stimuli selectively, signals transmitted through the packaging should be perceived as extraordinary. After buyer's interest in the product has been raised, customers concentrate on the packaging while ignoring other things [Solomon 2006, p. 82]. The duration of the attention phase depends heavily on buyer's:

- *Experience*: perceptual filters, developed as a result of past experience, decide which of the signals emitted by the packaging are processed by the customer;
- *Vigilance*: the state of mind which makes it possible for the buyer to identify stimuli related to his/her current needs. For example: a person who rarely buys boxes of chocolates pays also no attention to their packaging as long as there is no need to give them as a gift. Similarly, a chocolate bar attracts the attention of a hungry customer who stands in line at the supermarket even if it is not on a shopping list;
- *Adaptation*: the point at which people stop responding to the signals as they are already familiar with them. Whenever a signal is adopted, manufacturers should choose to introduce new stimulus so that the product attracts customers again.

In order to understand how quickly customers become insensitive to the particular elements of packaging design, it is reasonable to indicate factors which influence the process of stimulus adaptation [Solomon 2006, p. 83]:

- *stimulus intensity*: low-intense stimuli (e.g. blurred colours of packaging) tend to be less powerful and less durable than high-intense stimuli;
- *stimulus duration*: stimuli which require a significant period of exposure in order to be processed (e.g. on-package recycling information) get customer accustomed to the packaging as a whole;
- *stimulus distinction*: simple stimuli (e.g. monochromatic pack) tend to be ignored quickly since there are no details which may attract customer attention;
- *stimulus exposure*: frequent exposures of the stimuli (e.g. at each checkout) make buyers familiar with the product;
- *stimuli interrelations*: stimuli that are not relevant to the target audience (e.g. bar codes) tend to be overlooked.

After the sensory reception, each stimulus is subject to interpretation. This process draws on elements such as emotions, memory, motivation, personality and attitude. It comprises of two different subprocesses of information processing: 'bottom-up' and 'top-down'. The first one integrates simple elements of signals that come to a customer from the environment. The second one is related to the perceptual synthesis which is strongly af-

affected by customer experience. Hence the choice of packaging depends on both sensory factors and buyer's long-term memory.

The perception process results in customer action. It is therefore of great importance to companies to understand the manner in which customers perceive the product and its packaging. Once it is done, packaging design is capable of driving and maximizing sales.

#### 4. LEGAL REGULATIONS ON CONFECTIONERY PACKAGING

There are several regulatory requirements for packaging design which have been introduced on behalf of the European Union. They apply to different stages of packaging life cycle:

- *packaging conception* – e.g. regulation No 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and repealing Directives 80/590/EEC and 89/109/EEC;
- *raw material transformation and packaging manufacturing* – e.g. Commission Directive 2003/94/EC laying down the principles and guidelines of good manufacturing practice in respect of medicinal products for human use and investigational medicinal products for human use;
- *packaging filling* – e.g. Directive 2000/13/EC relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs. Regulation (EC) No. 1830/2003 concerning the traceability and labelling of food and feed products produced from genetically modified organisms and amending Directive 2001/18/EC;
- *valorisation and recycling packaging waste* – e.g. Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste, as amended by Directive 2004/12/EC.

Since focus has been given to the use of CSR policies, packaging has become a subject of public interest [Hales 1999, p. 131]. Companies are therefore encouraged to take up voluntary activities aiming at meeting customers' expectations and eliminating fraud procedures. In order to make customers fully aware of these CSR initiatives, businesses have started to display such information on labels which are usually printed directly on packaging. As a result, three fundamental types of labels have evolved: qualitative, descriptive and informative [Hales 1999, p. 133]. Qualitative labels include icons which reflect the level of product quality. These quality symbols are exclusively reserved for products that meet certain requirements. Descriptive



labels, in turn, provide basic information about product characteristics such as brand name, net weight or methods of manufacturing. Finally, informative labels present the full range of information related to a particular product. They enable a customer to learn about serving suggestions, nutrition facts, the frequency of application etc. The choice of the most appropriate label depends heavily on the type of product and the channels through which it is sold. In order to support the image of a company, each label should be characterized by the optimal amount of information, impeccable printing, and the right balance between packaging's shape and its colors [Cichoń 1996, p. 126].

All food and beverages are subject to mandatory labeling. It is Directive 2000/13/EC which clarifies labeling, advertising and presentation requirements for these product categories. Most importantly, 'the labeling and methods used must not be such as could mislead the purchaser as to the characteristics of the foodstuff, its nature, identity, properties, composition, quantity, durability, origin or provenance, method of manufacture or production' (Directive 2000/13/EC). Moreover, it is not allowed to attribute to the foodstuff effects or properties which it does not possess. Finally, labels must not suggest that the foodstuff possesses special characteristics when in fact all similar foodstuffs possess such characteristics. Domestic regulations are in line with the European Commission requirements. According to them, food manufacturers are obliged to provide specific information on labels. These include: trade name, ingredients, allergy advice, net weight, expiry date, storage conditions, product origin, batch number, and manufacturer's address. Moreover, a universal barcode is placed on each packaging [Mruk, Rutkowski, p. 99]. The right to use the EAN code (European Article Numbering) is granted to countries that have joined the International Article Numbering Association (IANA). Poland has joined IANA in 1990 and uses prefix 590. Since then both manufacturers and retailers use bar code scanning in order to control inventories and sales.

## 5. PACKAGING AND ITS ROLE IN THE POLISH CONFECTIONERY MARKET

### 5.1. OVERVIEW

Since packaging is believed to serve as a powerful tool for communication and branding, it is considered to be vital to the FMCG market [Don 2013]. The development of packaging design is given an extremely high priority

when it comes to confectioneries. The reason for this is that sweets remain at the top spot for impulse purchases [Glaberson 2011]. Indeed, functionality, convenience and sustainability are driving Polish packaging market for confectioneries. However, best practices regarding the use of packaging design to trigger the purchase of sweets remain undefined. This research aims to fill this gap.

The main objective of this paper is to present students' preferences for packaging design of a chocolate bar. According to the Polish Classification of Activities, the confectionery market consists of three fundamental segments: bakery, chocolate and candies. The total value of all three segments is estimated at 9.65 billion PLN. Bakery and chocolate make the largest contribution in the growth of the market (increase of 9.5% and 8.5% respectively). Hence manufacturers of both categories are seen to be the most powerful market players.

Table 2. Top manufacturers of bakery and chocolate in the Polish confectionery market

Chocolate manufacturers		
	Share in the overall sales value (1.3 bn PLN)	Share in the overall sales volume (49.1 m kg)
Kraft Foods Poland	36%	30%
LOTTE Wedel	24%	22%
Private labels	13%	22%
Others	27%	26%
Bakery manufacturers		
	Share in the overall sales value (1.1 bn PLN)	Share in the overall sales volume (65.2 m kg)
Kraft Foods Poland	34%	26%
Private labels	22%	32%
Bahlsen Group	15%	15%
Others	29%	27%

Source: own elaboration.

Sweets are most often purchased at supermarkets (21% of total market value, 24% of total sales volume), groceries (25% and 23% respectively), and hypermarkets (17% and 19% respectively). Since the value of pre-packaged chocolate bars represents the largest portion of total market value (18.1%), they have been chosen as the object of the study. This category of sweets accounts for 18.0% of the overall sales volume (estimated at 255.62 million kg).

According to AC Nielsen industry report, chocolate is usually bought at supermarkets (36% of total sales value) and medium-sized groceries (21.9%).

5.2. METHODOLOGY

After the secondary data concerning industry performance had been analyzed, the customer survey was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions. It was completed by 100 respondents who were shopping at one of the supermarket chains. At every stage of the research the focus was given to a random selection of respondents. Hence high level of sample representativeness has been achieved. Characteristics of study population has been shown in Table 3. They stay in line with the structure of students' population and higher education in Cracow.

Table 3. Characteristics of study population

	Number (share) of respondents*	Gender		Modes of study	
		female	male	stationary	non- stationary
Jagiellonian University	46 (46%)	31 (68%)	15 (32%)	31 (67%)	15 (33%)
AGH University of Science and Technology	33 (33%)	10 (30%)	23 (70%)	24 (73%)	9 (27%)
Cracow University of Economics	21 (21%)	13 (64%)	8 (36%)	10 (49%)	11 (51%)

\* Values in brackets refer to the size of the entire study sample (n = 100)

Source: own elaboration.

Packaging design of chocolate bars has been examined with the use of elements shown in Figure 1.

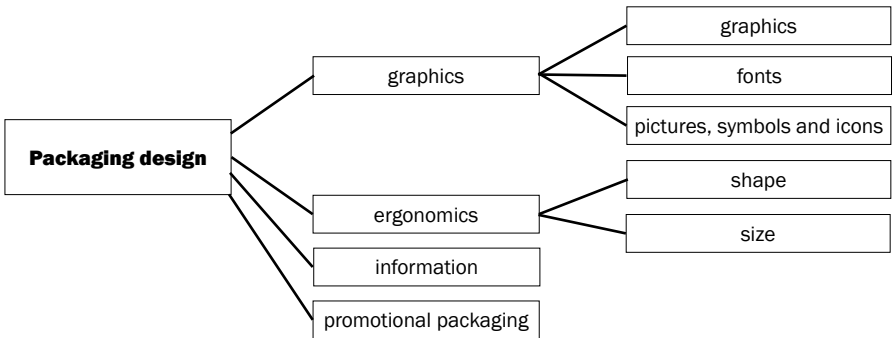


Figure 1. Elements of packaging design

### 5.3. STUDENTS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS CHOCOLATE PACKAGING

Students who buy chocolate account for 98% of the general population. The results presented in this paper do not apply to customers who have never bought any chocolate before.

Chocolate is believed to be purchased by the overwhelming portion of students (98%). These are both women (54%) and men (46%). Bars are bought by 60% of students whereas cookies – only by 14% of them. Other categories of sweets are not popular among students. Interestingly, the choice of confectionery goods is determined mostly by personal habits (46%), price (41%), advertising (28%) and product quality (24%). It should be emphasized that only 23% of students pay attention to packaging when selecting confectioneries. These are only women.

#### *Graphics*

For over half of the respondents (51%) pictures displayed on packaging are crucial when choosing a chocolate bar. In addition, almost every second student (47%) pays attention to the colour of packaging. These are mainly women (96%). What is more, the colour of pre-packaged chocolate bar serves as a primary selection criteria for the majority of women (81%). The possibility to open/re-close is, in turn, essential for 44% chocolate buyers. These are mostly men (67%). The shape of chocolate bar is far more likely to be taken into consideration by women whereas the visibility of brand logo – by men. The type of font is significant for every fourth student (mostly female) whereas packaging material is of high importance for every fifth chocolate buyer (mostly male). Only 14% of the respondents pay attention to the quality of information presented on a packaging. Most of these are women (71%).

Table 4. Factors determining the choice of packaging

Factor	The percentage of chocolate buyers (n = 98)	Of whom	
		women	men
Pictures	51%	48%	52%
Colour	47%	96%	4%
Possibility to open / re-close	44%	33%	67%
Shape	39%	76%	24%
Visibility of brand logotype	29%	18%	82%
Font	24%	63%	38%
Packaging material	19%	26%	74%
Quality of information	14%	71%	29%

The outcomes do not add up to 100% since the respondents were given the option of indicating their top-three alternatives.

Source: own elaboration.

The colour of packaging tends to inform customers about the flavour of chocolate. Colours, which are most frequently attributed to various chocolate flavours, have been presented below.

Table 5. Colours determining the flavour of chocolate

Colour	The most common flavour attribution
Brown	milk (70%)
Black	dark (86%)
Green	nuts (77%)
Silver	coconut (54%)
Red	strawberry (77%)
Purple	raisins&nuts (70%)
Gold	toffee (63%)
White	white (93%)

Source: own elaboration.

It is worth mentioning that in the opinion of the majority of students (77%) all these colour-flavour associations should be applied only to these graphic objects which distinguish one chocolate flavor from another. The minority (23%) of the respondents find it useful to cover the whole packaging with a particular colour.

### *Ergonomics and shape*

There has been identified no form of a chocolate bar which would encourage over a half of the respondents to purchase a new brand of chocolate. However, triangle chocolate bar appears to be of the great interest. If introduced, women's purchases would be affected to a greater extent. Men would, in turn, be more encouraged to try new brand of chocolate if it's packed in a triangular prism. Other shapes of chocolate bar are not perceived as influential.

Table 6. Shapes of chocolate bars which would trigger the purchase of new brand

Shape	The percentage of chocolate buyers	Of whom	
		women	men
Triangle	46%	67%	33%
Triangular prism	23%	30%	70%
Circle	11%	82%	18%
Horizontal rectangle	10%	40%	60%
Square	6%	33%	67%
Vertical rectangle	2%	50%	50%

Source: own elaboration.

### Size

Almost every student buys chocolate (98% of study population). In most cases (79%), the weight of chocolate bar is between 51–100 grams. Interestingly, none of the respondents chooses chocolate bars which weigh less than 50 grams or more than 200 grams. Chocolate bars weighing 51–100 grams or 101–150 grams are bought equally often by women and men. On the other hand, only women purchase chocolate bars weighing below 50 grams. Moreover, 82% of students who buy chocolate far more often than other sweets choose these of a weight from 51 to 100 grams.

### Information

The majority of students consider quality symbols to be the most significant source of front-side information. These icons are of the highest importance for 77% of male chocolate buyers. In the opinion of over half of the respondents, expiry date should be positioned on the front of chocolate packaging. This type of information is almost equally important for both women and men. Almost every second student would like to see calories per serving icon on the front of pre-packaged chocolate bar. It is also the most desirable type of front-side information among female buyers (76%). Finally, presenting net weight on the front of pre-packaged chocolate meets the expectations of 37% students. There is no need to include other types of information on the front of chocolate packaging.

Table 7. Elements which should be displayed on the front of pre-packaged chocolate bar

Element	The percentage of chocolate buyers (n = 98)	Of whom	
		women	men
Quality symbols	64%	46%	54%
Expiry date	57%	46%	54%
Calories per serving	48%	87%	13%
Net weight	37%	53%	47%
Serving suggestion	11%	100%	0%
Nutrition facts	4%	25%	75%
Country of origin	3%	33%	67%
Storage conditions	2%	50%	50%
Allergy advice	2%	50%	50%

The outcomes do not add up to 100% since the respondents were given the option of indicating their top-three alternatives.

Source: own elaboration.

The average frequency of the use of information is about 2.7 which means that students sometimes take advantage of the information provided by

one packaging in order to make a better purchase. Expiry date is most often paid attention to. Nutrition facts, net weight and quality symbols are also frequently used. The findings also show that, as might have been expected, women seek information about calories per serving far more often than men. Other information is used rarely in consumer decision making process.

Table 8. The average frequency of the use of information presented on packaging\*

Type of information	Average (n = 98)	Among	
		women	men
Expiry date	4.46	4.59	4.30
Nutrition facts	3.57	3.91	3.16
Net weight	3.50	3.63	3.34
Quality symbols	3.21	3.44	2.93
Calories per serving	3.07	4.06	1.86
Country of origin	2.35	2.31	2.39
Storage conditions	1.99	2.20	1.73
Serving suggestion	1.78	2.00	1.50
Allergy advice	1.54	1.69	1.36

\* 1 – never, 5 – always

Source: own elaboration.

For the majority of students (86%) icons, symbol and pictures serve as the main source of chocolate flavor. Written information (76%) and the colour of packaging (50%) are also considered to be important sources of chocolate flavor (50%). However, graphic objects tend to be noticed in the first place. Interestingly, in order to identify the flavor of chocolate, women take a look at graphic objects at first (71%) whereas men – at written information (50%). Moreover, female buyers (72%) use the colour of packaging as a source of chocolate flavor far more often than men (22%).

Table 9. The sources of information about the flavour of chocolate

Source	The percentage of chocolate buyers (n = 98)
Graphic objects	86%
Written information	76%
Colour	50%
Font	2%

The outcomes do not add up to 100% since the respondents were given the option of indicating their top-three alternatives.

Source: own elaboration.

### *Promotional packaging*

The majority of students (71%) usually go for promotional packaging in order to take part in contests, sweepstakes or games. Lottery codes and coupons attract 80% of men and 65% of women, indeed. Cents-off deals are the most popular promotional packagings among female chocolate buyers (70%). Interestingly, men are more prone to choose a packaging which is designed to be re-used whereas women – the one that offers price-pack deal. Every third student pays attention to samplings, regardless of gender.

Table 10. The types of promotional chocolate bars

Type of promotional packaging	The percentage of chocolate buyers (n = 98)
Contests, sweepstakes, games	71%
Cents-off deal	60%
Designed to re-use	57%
Price-pack deal	37%
Samplings	32%

The outcomes do not add up to 100% since the respondents were given the option of indicating their top-three alternatives.

Source: own elaboration.

Since promotional packagings attract the vast majority of students, companies have started to use them as a basis of product differentiation in the Polish confectionery market [Table 11].

Table 11. Promotional packagings of the most popular chocolate bars

Type of promotional packaging	Leading brand
Contests, sweepstakes, games	Alpen Gold (70%)
Cents-off deal	Milka (59%)
Designed to re-use	Goplana (39%)
Price-pack deal	Wedel (81%)
Samplings	Lindt (71%)

Source: own elaboration.

### *The most successful packaging of chocolate bar in the Polish confectionery market*

None of selected chocolate packagings is considered to be attractive to more than 36% of students. Lindt – the leader of general classification – has gained its market superiority mainly due to the use of unique graphic objects and sophisticated fonts. These two elements have significantly increased



customer willingness to buy a bar of Lindt's chocolate. On the other hand, the runner-up of the ranking – Milka – has taken the advantage of both packaging's functionality and logotype visibility. Wedel aims to follow in leaders' footsteps and closes the Top 3 with the highest level of packaging's functionality. Other brands are not believed to compete successfully in the field of packaging design.

Table 12. The attractiveness of chocolate packaging across various brands

Brand Evaluation criteria	Lindt	Terravita	Wawel	Wedel	Goplana	Alpen Gold	Milka	Overall
Functionality	4%	1%	0%	43%	2%	8%	42%	100%
Visibility of brand logotype	6%	0%	4%	3%	0%	20%	66%	100%
Font	42%	0%	5%	32%	2%	0%	19%	100%
Graphic objects	69%	4%	3%	11%	0%	4%	8%	100%
Willingness to buy	56%	0%	2%	21%	0%	2%	18%	100%
Share in overall classification	36%	1%	3%	22%	1%	7%	31%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

### *Managerial implications*

Since Polish confectionery market is growing rapidly, companies use more and more sophisticated tools to achieve market leadership. As 59% of students admit to buying sweets on impulse, packaging design is considered to be a primary source of competitive advantage for confectionery manufacturers [Glaberson 2011].

Compliance with the legal regulations concerning food and beverages labeling is the prerequisite for fair competition. The edge over competitors is achieved mainly by taking advantage of secondary functions of packaging which relate to the perceptual level of communication. Since packaging design attracts customer attention, creates a unique scenery at the point of sale, and drives purchase intent, it is believed to be an effective sales tool.

Although many researches consider promotional role of packaging as essential to FMCG manufacturers, recent studies suggest that only 23% of students pay attention to packaging when purchasing confectioneries. It should be emphasized that this group consists mostly of women. Buyers' habits (46%) and price (41%) are still the main criteria for the selection of sweets.

Interestingly, the more often students pay attention to packaging when selecting sweets, the more often they take into account the colour of pack-

aging when choosing chocolate bar ( $r = 0.507$ ). Moreover, the more often attention is paid to packaging:

- the less often individual habits are taken into consideration when selecting confectioneries ( $r = -0.406$ );
- the less often price is taken into account when choosing sweets ( $r = -0.307$ );
- the less often brand is taken into consideration when selecting confectionery goods ( $r = -0.237$ ).

### *Limitations*

It should be emphasized that students' preferences for packaging design have been identified with the use of customer survey. In order to fill in the questionnaire respondents needed to consider each of the given answer options. This means that the majority of the results presented in this paper relate to the rational reasons for purchasing confectioneries. Since sweets are usually bought on impulse it is highly probable that the use of a different research method (e.g. experiment) would demonstrate the greater significance of packaging in the confectionery market.

### *Further research*

The results of this study provide a useful insight for packaging designers. However, more work is needed to determine which elements of packaging design drive purchase intent. The impact of incremental changes in packaging design on sales volume should also be discussed. Finally, it is highly recommended to estimate the extent to which packaging affects the image of a company.

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